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IX.—MARIVAUD'S PLACE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF CHARACTER PORTRAYAL

When in 1710-11 the Sir Roger de Coverley papers appeared in the *Spectator*, the art of the novel seemed to have been discovered. The wonder is that people did not sooner awaken to a realization that a new form of art had been created. The faithful description of life and manners was there, the interest of character and incident was also present. The essays needed but to have been thrown into the form of a continuous narrative to have given us at least the germ of the modern novel. As a matter of fact, however, the actual appearance of the novel was delayed for nearly three decades.

Meanwhile, there was exerted upon the development of English prose fiction a powerful influence from abroad. This foreign influence was French, and was exerted through the work of Marivaux, who introduced a new psychological or analytical sentimentality. Through his introduction into fiction of this new fashion of the intent analysis of fleeting human moods, Marivaux represents an important stage in the evolution of the modern novel.

This much seems to have been recognized by nearly all literary historians.¹ What they have failed to recognize, or at least to emphasize sufficiently, is the exact nature of the relation between Marivaux and the delineators of

¹ "The direct link between Addison as a picturesque narrative essayist, and Richardson, as the first great English novelist, is to be found in Pierre de Marivaux (1688-1763), who imitated the *Spectator*, and who is often assumed, though somewhat too rashly, to have suggested the tone of *Pamela*." Edmund Gosse, *A History of Eighteenth Century Literature*, London, 1896, p. 243.

character who preceded and followed him. As a matter of fact, Marivaux in *Le Spectateur Français* shows himself both an imitator and an innovator. The imitation appears in the adoption, with some variations, to be sure, of Addison's general purpose and method; the innovation, in the introduction into the portrayals of character of a minute and sentimental analysis of human feelings.

Le Spectateur Français was one of several of Marivaux's journalistic ventures. Indeed, among his first literary attempts had been certain contributions to the *Mercur*. These had been signed "Théophraste Moderne," both the articles and the pseudonym attesting his early bent toward Character-writing. Later, the phenomenal success of the English *Spectator* inspired Marivaux with the idea of attempting to emulate Addison and his colleagues. The result was, in 1722, *Le Spectateur Français*. It was to have appeared weekly, but it soon became intermittent, and in the following year was discontinued.¹ In all there were but twenty-five issues, so that, compared to its English predecessor with its six hundred and thirty-five numbers, it is not impressive in volume.

Superficially, it resembles its English prototype pretty closely. They are alike in their philosophic tone and moral purpose; for Addison and Marivaux shared the narrow conception of philosophy current in their age. To both, philosophy meant, not an abstract study of principles and causes, but a reflection based upon an observation of things as they are, and directed to a moral end. In Number 10 of the *Spectator*, Addison stated his purpose to be

¹ In 1728 the periodical was revived by Marivaux under the title *L'Indigent Philosophe ou l'Homme sans souci* (seven numbers); and again in 1734 under the title *Le Cabinet du Philosophe* (eleven numbers).

that of "bringing philosophy out of closets and libraries, schools, and colleges, to dwell in clubs, and assemblies, at tea-tables and in coffee-houses." The method proposed for the carrying out of this rather ambitious design is revealed by Steele in Number 4, when he makes the Spectator say, "I have the highest satisfaction of beholding all nature with an unprejudiced eye, and having nothing to do with men's passions or interests, I can with the greater sagacity, consider their talents, manners, failings, and merits." The moral end to which the work is directed is clearly stated by Addison in Number 10, "And to the end that their (the readers') virtue and discretion may not be short, transient, intermitting starts of thought, I have resolved to refresh their memories from day to day, till I have recovered them out of that desperate state of vice and folly, into which the age has fallen." Thus it appears that Addison was mainly interested in practical ethics.¹

Precisely similar is Marivaux's purpose, for he, too, aimed at ethical culture: "I desire," he says, "that my reflections may be useful . . . and it is only with that end in view that I give them, and not to prove myself a man of wit." Elsewhere in the same essay he remarks, "If I could see that some one had profited somewhat by reading my reflections, had been corrected in some defect, oh! that would touch me, and that pleasure would be within my sphere."

Not only in his aim, but in a general way in his method, also, Marivaux closely resembles Addison. The essays in *Le Spectateur Français* may be roughly classified into five groups corresponding to a partial classification of those

¹ In the *Spectator*, No. 459, Addison even upholds the claims of morality to be more important than those of religion.

in the *Spectator*. These are: editorial, manners and humors, religious, critical, tales and allegories.

In his editorial papers Marivaux imitated Addison in furnishing some autobiographic details intended to account for the attitude toward life that he intended to assume in the following papers. Like Addison, Marivaux assumes the rôle of an elderly man who has travelled much, and who has cultivated his faculty of observation, and his habit of reticence. "If I have any wit," he says, "I verily believe that no one knows it, for I have never taken the trouble to carry on a conversation, nor to defend my opinions, and this because of insurmountable indolence. Besides, my advanced age, my travels, the long-continued custom of living only to see and to hear, and the experience I have acquired, have blunted my self-love . . . so that, if my friends were to say of me that I would pass for a man of wit, I do not really know that I should be more content with myself."¹ Marivaux fully realized the cynical turn of his mind, which appears in everything he wrote, particularly in his discussions of matters feminine. Consequently, he does not try to assume the virtue, natural for Addison, of good-natured tolerance. In the attempt to account for the cynicism that he knew would inevitably be apparent in his essays, he tells us how at the age of seventeen he fell in love with a beautiful girl who seemed to him charmingly and guilelessly natural. One day, after some hours together out of doors, he found that he had carried away one of her gloves. As he approached to return it, he saw her from a distance occupied with a hand-glass practising the expressions of countenance that had just charmed him by their apparently unstudied

¹ Marivaux's half-humorous characterization of himself is almost exactly parallel to Addison's in No. 1 of the *Spectator*.

grace. To this experience he attributes a life-long cynicism and misanthropy. Whether this incident be genuinely autobiographic, or whether it is to be taken no more seriously than Addison's editorial reminiscences of his "voyage to Grand Cairo on purpose to take the measure of a pyramid," the fact remains that Marivaux's attitude toward life in general, and particularly toward women, is considerably more contemptuous even than Addison's. This shows most plainly in the second group into which I have classified the essays—those dealing with manners and humors.

Women—their follies and the results of those follies—play an important part in Marivaux's essays, as they had played in Addison's. The latter had, it will be remembered, particularly addressed himself to their amendment. In Number 4 of the *Spectator* Addison announced his intention to "dedicate a considerable share of these my speculations to their (women's) service, and shall lead the young through all the becoming duties of virginity, marriage, and widowhood." Again in Number 10 he especially commends the periodical to the perusal of "the female world," as a means of promoting "a more elevated life and conversation." And how large a proportion of the *Spectator* papers are filled with the concerns of women—their fashions and foibles—the most superficial reader cannot fail to note.¹ But large as is this proportion, it is far exceeded by the relative amount of space their interests occupy in the essays of Marivaux. M. Fleury's remark² that "Ce sont les femmes qui occupent

¹ In No. 205 of the *Spectator* Addison gives a list of 25 essays in the periodical dealing with various follies of women. Swift thought too much attention was given to them. "Let him fair-sex it to the world's end!" he wrote to Stella, Feb. 8, 1711-12.

² Jean Fleury, *Marivaux et Marivaudage*, Paris, 1881, p. 45.

la place prépondérante dans le *Spectateur*” is quite justified by the facts.

Addison's and Marivaux's opinions of women are fundamentally alike. Each considered coquetry to be women's besetting sin. In Number 128 of the *Spectator* Addison declares, “As vivacity is the gift of women, gravity is that of men. They should each of them, therefore, keep a watch upon the particular bias which nature has fixed in their minds, that it may not draw too much and lead them out of the path of reason . . . Men should beware of being captivated by a kind of savage philosophy, women by a thoughtless gallantry. Where these precautions are not observed, the man often degenerates into a cynic, the woman into a coquette.” Similarly, Marivaux makes coquetry the mainspring of the life of women. Four years before the publication of *Le Spectateur Français*, Marivaux contributed to the *Mercure* a series of essays in the form of letters. In one of these,¹ he discusses the characters of women. “Women,” he writes, “have a sentiment of coquetry that never leaves their minds. It is violent on occasions of excitement, sometimes quiescent, but always present, always on the alert. In brief, it is the unfailing impulse of their lives; it is the sacred fire that never goes out . . . A woman who is no longer a coquette, is a woman that has ceased to exist.” The belief that all women are coquettes seems to have become even more a matter of conviction with Marivaux by the time he wrote his later periodical essays. Three of those in *Le Spectateur Français* are wholly devoted to an exposition of female coquetry, under the title *Mémoire*

¹ “Deuxième lettre a madame M. . .” These essays are reprinted in Marivaux's collected works (Vol. 9) under the title *Pièces Détachées*.

de ce que j'ai fait et vu pendant ma vie. It is a brief autobiography of a septuagenarian coquette who has at last awakened to a realization that her power to charm is gone. Early in her confessions she apologizes for her deviations from the straight and narrow way by saying, "I was a woman, and one cannot be a woman without being a coquette. It is only in fiction that one sees any other kind of women; but in nature such anomalies are a myth, and real women are all as I was."¹

If the concerns of women occupy a proportionately larger space in *Le Spectateur Français* than in its English predecessor, that excess is fully counterbalanced by the relatively smaller space allotted by Marivaux to religious matters. Indeed there are in the *Spectateur* no essays that bear a close analogy to those Saturday papers of Addison such as "On Religious Faith and Practice,"² or "On the Dependence of Man Upon the Supreme Being"³—all conventional eighteenth-century homilies by "a parson in a tie-wig." Marivaux never preaches. Always he prefers the more dramatic method of presenting his ideas; and so, instead of homilies, he gives us a spirited and satiric account of a meeting with a typical free-thinker, who does not really think, but borrows his ideas from the skeptics of the age.⁴ This is the only essay of the series that deals with religion, but it is amply sufficient, taken in conjunction with certain passages in his other writings, to show that the difference between Addison and Marivaux in matters religious is mainly one of form and emphasis, and that in their opinions they are singularly alike.

¹ *Le Spectateur Français*, Feuilles 17, 18, 19.

² No. 459.

³ No. 441.

⁴ *Le Spectateur Français*, quinzième Feuille.

Both are strictly conservative. Addison disliked the somber rigidity of the sectarian Christians of his day. These "sons of sorrow," as he calls them, he satirizes in Number 494 of the *Spectator* in the form of a character-sketch of Sombrius, who "thinks himself obliged in duty to be sad and disconsolate," and who "looks on a sudden fit of laughter as a breach of his baptismal vow," and who "would have behaved himself very properly, had he lived when Christianity was under a general persecution." Addison avoided, also, the opposite extreme as represented by the liberalism of the rationalists or deists, who aimed at the elimination from Christianity of the "mythical" or miraculous element on which it professes to be based. He believed that, on the whole, the best way to be easy here and happy hereafter was to conform to the usages of Christianity as embodied in the faith and practice of the established church. Marivaux, living at a time when in France irreligion was becoming fashionable, was also, though less outspokenly, an upholder of the established order. His general attitude toward religion is thus given by M. Fleury: ¹ "Pour Marivaux en théorie;—pour ses personnages dans la pratique,—la religion est une forme bonne à conserver, parce que c'est une tradition, parce que la morale y est étroitement liée." This statement is entirely just to Marivaux; for it was, as has been said, practical morality that chiefly interested him. For preaching that did not directly appeal to the feelings and the will, he cared very little. "To speak frankly," he says, ² "I am not much surprised at the slight effect of sermons; most of them are only examples of eloquence, where the preacher exhorts us less to become penitent than to become

¹ *Marivaux et Marivaudage*, p. 265.

² Quinzième Feuille.

clever." Nor was he interested in theological controversy. He did not ally himself either with the upholders of the established faith, nor with those who attacked it. Yet always he shows a respectful regard for the opinions of others. It is significant that he deplored the flippant manner of Montesquieu in the *Persian Letters* on the ground that it might bring religion into discredit, and, as a result, lower the moral tone of society. In religion, Marivaux's general attitude toward the conservatives and the radicals of his day was, like Addison's, conciliatory. It is quite clear that, while hating controversy, and distrusting the value of argument in religious matters as outside the province of religion, he personally belonged to the party of conservatism, believing that those who boasted of their emancipation from the old creeds, at the same time substituting some newly recognized "system of philosophy," were really only exchanging one form of credulity for another.¹ Moreover, he feared that such an exchange would be subversive of morality.

The moral education of his contemporaries was Marivaux's chief concern. With this aim he did not to any extent unite, as Addison had done,² the subordinate purpose of educating public taste in matters aesthetic. Addison had essayed to formulate the rules that govern, or were thought to govern, the drama³ and the epic.⁴ Often

¹ Quinzième Feuille.

² "On peut dire qu'il a inauguré pour eux la critique littéraire." A. Beljame, *Le Public et les Hommes de Lettres en Angleterre au Dix-huitième Siècle*, Paris, 1897, p. 311.

"As the great and only end of these my speculations," wrote Addison in No. 58 of the *Spectator*, "is to banish vice and ignorance out of the territories of Great Britain, I shall endeavor as much as possible to establish among us a taste of polite writing."

³ *E. g.*, in Nos. 39, 40, 41, 42.

⁴ In the essays upon Milton's *Paradise Lost*.

he discussed the work of his contemporaries.¹ With the principles of literary criticism, Marivaux, on the contrary, does not concern himself; and to the writings of his contemporaries he is almost equally indifferent. Only two of them—Montesquieu and de la Motte—are discussed in the issues of *Le Spectateur Français*.² He does, however, express himself freely³ upon what he regards as the prevalent shortcomings of current literary criticism—its superficiality, and its almost idolatrous reverence for authority. In this discussion he shows clearly that he differs fundamentally from Addison in his attitude toward authority. "I have a great esteem for a true critic" the later had written,⁴ "such as Aristotle and Longinus among the Greeks; Horace and Quintilian among the Romans; Boileau and Dacier among the French." Marivaux, on the contrary, had no regard for critical authority ancient or modern. Yet he believed critics to be a kind of necessary evil. "Il faut pourtant des critiques," he tells us;⁵ but he thinks they should be extremely careful not to formulate and insist upon arbitrary rules that tend to hamper originality in young authors. He believes that their work should be constructive wholly. "Je voudrais des critiques," he says,⁶ "qui pussent corriger et non pas gâter, qui réformassent ce qu'il y aurait de défectueux dans le caractère d'esprit d'un auteur et qui ne lui fissent pas quitter ce caractère." So different is Marivaux's whole attitude to-

¹ *E. g.*, No. 253 on Pope's *Essay on Criticism*; No. 290 and 400, upon Philips's *The Distressed Mother* and *Pastoral Verses* respectively; and No. 523, upon the *Miscellany* of Pope and Philips.

² Montesquieu's *Lettres Persanes* are reviewed in Huitième Feuille; La Motte's *Romulus* in Troisième Feuille, his *Inez de Castro* in Vingtième Feuille.

³ Septième Feuille.

⁵ Septième Feuille.

⁴ *The Spectator*, No. 592.

⁶ Septième Feuille.

ward criticism, both in theory and practice, from that of Addison as to seem in part to justify M. Larroumet's assertion¹ that there are more differences than resemblances between the two authors.

At a casual glance the differences are more apparent than the resemblances, also, in the fifth group into which Marivaux's essays may conveniently be classified—that containing the tales and allegories. In this group Marivaux's lack of logical method in narration is clearly manifest. Often he does not complete what he begins, or at least does not finish it at the time he promises. At the end of the third number, for example, he mentions a dream, an account of which he claims to have found in a Spanish manuscript. In the opening sentence of the following paper he mentions this dream, but defers giving it because he has “quelque chose de plus pressant à dire.” In the opening of the fifth number, he again refers to the dream but only to postpone it, this time, on the ground that his mind is full of “un libertinage d'idées, qui ne peut s'accommoder d'un sujet fixe.” It is not till the latter part of the sixth paper, twenty-two pages (in the collected edition) after the first announcement of it, that he abruptly introduces the long deferred dream. Even then he does not finish it, but predicts its completion in the following issue. The prophecy is unfulfilled, and he does not again allude to it. With the same capricious disregard for sequence, the “Adventures of the Unknown,” which occupy four numbers of *Le Spectateur*, are interrupted in the middle by the twenty-third paper. At the beginning of the latter issue he offers an explanation of his inconsequential manner of writing.² It is due, he tells us, to his

¹ *Marivaux; sa Vie et ses Œuvres*, p. 402.

² Marivaux's lack of logical method was apparently a temperamental defect. Both his novels are incomplete.

desire to please those readers who prefer a varied literary fare, and who want to defer the reading of the long stories till the whole series shall have been collected and republished in a volume. "Besides," he naïvely adds—and one feels that this is the real reason for his lack of orderly method—"I like this way better; and I must write as I please." The insistence of the French critics, particularly M. Larroumet,¹ upon this weakness as an obvious mark of inferiority on the part of Marivaux to Addison seems not entirely just to Marivaux, for the Sir Roger de Coverley papers did not appear consecutively. Sir Roger first appears in Number 2, and for the last time in Number 544. Yet the total number of papers in which he figures is only forty.

Sir Roger de Coverley has no rival, nor indeed any successor in *Le Spectateur Français*. Marivaux's forte was the detailed analysis of feeling, not the creation of character. His stories contain no striking figures, nor as narratives do they make any strong appeal to the reader's interest. Only one, the story of Anacharsis, the Scythian,² is strictly comparable to that group of Addison's that includes the story of Alnaschar³ and that of Fadlallah.⁴ In this apologue, written to show that the prime essential for success is to make one's self feared rather than beloved, we miss Addison's large benevolence. The same misanthropy is evident in Marivaux's allegory of love.⁵ In this the basic idea is that the love of men for

¹ "Mais l'esprit logique et ami de la règle qui inspire le *Spectateur* anglais lui donne un mérite qui manque trop au *Spectateur Français*. . . . Addison ne laisse jamais de sujets en l'air, comme Marivaux; il traite tout dans la juste mesure, jusqu'au bout d'un développement régulier." *Marivaux; sa Vie et ses Œuvres*, p. 403.

² Troisième Feuille.

³ No. 535.

⁴ No. 578.

⁵ Sixième Feuille.

women has, under modern conditions, lost its power to ennoble the life of the lover. Men no longer feel inspired by it to make themselves worthy of women, who still persist in idealizing them. And so, "c'est que l'Amour ne règne plus parmi les hommes"—a thesis that it would be hard to prove in any age, and one that Addison, certainly, would not have defended.

Had Marivaux's essays been merely an imitation of Addison's, they would scarcely merit a detailed examination by a student of English literature, for they would have no interest beyond that of any other of the various series of periodical essays inspired by the success of the English *Spectator*.¹ As a matter of fact, however, they possess an importance quite disproportionate to their intrinsic merit, because, through the subtlety of character analysis that they reveal, they furnish a connection between the essay as Addison wrote it and the novel of manners that followed. The one thing that distinguishes the novel as written by Marivaux, by Richardson, by Fielding, and by Sterne, from the refined sentimentalism of Madame de la Fayette and from the romance of adventure of Defoe and Le Sage was its psychological or sentimental analysis of human feeling. Few more careful

¹The influence of the *Spectator* on the Continent was very great. Besides the French imitations, there were German, Italian, and Russian periodicals on the same plan as *The Spectator*. Those of Germany began with the *Discourse der Maler*, Zurich, 1721. Altogether 182 such publications were started in Germany before 1760. In Italy we hear of Gozzi's *Observatore*, 1761-1762. In Russia, Alexander Romald, in his *Tableau de la Littérature Russe* (St. Petersburg, 1872, p. 67) mentions "Une foule de publications périodiques qui parurent de 1769 à 1774. Le meilleur de tous était le *Peintre* dans lequel des articles de critique et de polémique alternaient avec d'autres ayant un fond plus sérieux." See T. S. Perry, *English Literature in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 180.

and elaborate delineations of the human heart have ever been achieved than that of Marianne in Marivaux's novel of that name. As portrayed by Marivaux she is a born coquette, and as coldly calculating as Richardson's Pamela.¹ Like the latter, she was extremely careful of her reputation, because she knew it was her most valuable asset;² but she rejoiced, none the less, at the thought "j'allais en avoir le profit immodeste, en conservant tout le mérite de la modestie." She has a heart full of sensibility, "un cœur plein de sensibilité." Tears fill her eyes on the slightest provocation. She continually feels a "mélange affreux de sentimens," every one of which she carefully dissects and analyzes. Such analyses of the female heart were not known hitherto in fiction. They had been found only in the periodical essay as Marivaux wrote it.

Certain essays in *Le Spectateur Français* seem like preliminary studies for the character of Marianne. In the autobiography of the elderly coquette,³ for example, we have an anticipation of some of the self-revelation of Marianne. The following passage will illustrate the point. The coquette is describing her efforts to make herself attractive:

"Mais que de fatigues pour l'avoir cette figure galante,

¹ In Perry's *History of English Literature in the Eighteenth Century*, p. 321, the character of Pamela is compared with that of Marianne to the great disadvantage of the latter. It is hard to see, from reading the two novels, that any such marked difference really exists.

² Mrs. Barbauld wrote of Pamela, "We admire her guarded prudence, rather than her purity of mind. She has an end in view, an interested end, and we can only consider her as the conscious possessor of a treasure, which she is wisely resolved not to part with but for its just price." Quoted by Austin Dobson, *Samuel Richardson*, pp. 34, 35.

³ Feuilles 17, 18, 19.

aussi bien que pour la varier ! Comment se coiffera-t-on ? quel habit mettra-t-on ? quels rubans ? de quelle couleur seront-ils ? celle-ci est plus douce, celle-là plus vive. Comment se déterminer ? Un air de douceur est bien touchant, un air de vivacité bien frappant. Où prendre du conseil pour un choix qui va décider de notre gloire de toute une journée ? Choisir l'air doux, c'est peut-être manquer son coup ; prendre l'air vif, c'est peut-être se rendre les yeux trop rudes. Il s'agit de consulter son miroir. Si jamais l'âme a porté des jugemens d'une justesse admirable, si jamais ses attentions sur quelque chose, ses examens, ses discussions, furent des prodiges de force, de goût, d'exactitude et de finesse, n'allez pas la croire capable de ces prodiges si étonnans, ailleurs que dans une femme qui est à sa toilette." ¹

Quite similar is Marianne's comment upon the art of dressing.² "Les hommes parlent de science et de philosophie ; voilà quelque chose de beau en comparaison de la science de bien placer un ruban, ou de décider de quelle couleur on le mettra ! Si on savait ce qui passe dans la tête d'une coquette en pareil cas, combien son âme est déliée et pénétrante ; si on voyait le finesse des jugemens qu'elle fait sur les goûts qu'elle essaie, et puis ce qu'elle rebute, et puis ce qu'elle hésite à choisir, et qu'elle choisit enfin par pure lassitude, car souvent elle n'est pas contente, et son idée va toujours plus loin que son exécution ; si on savait ce que je dis là, cela ferait peur, cela humilierait les plus forts esprits, et Aristote ne paraîtrait plus qu'un petit garçon . . . je savais être plusieurs femmes en une. Quand je voulais avoir un air fripon, j'avais un maintien et une parure qui faisaient

¹ Feuille 18.

² *Œuvres Complètes*, Paris, 1825, tome 9, p. 64.

mon affaire; le lendemain on me trouvait avec des grâces tendres; ensuite j'étais une beauté modeste, sérieuse, nonchalante." ¹

It must not be supposed, however, that Marivaux's analyses of feeling are always cynical, and, therefore, superficial. Now and again in his delineations of the feminine heart he wrote with passionate sincerity, and with a depth of insight that reminds one of George Eliot's clairvoyance. The situation that especially roused his pity and his indignation, and in the portrayal of which he lavished all the resources of his art as a delineator of feminine feelings, is that of the young woman whose confidence has been betrayed. The two numbers ² that best illustrate this are, like so many of Marivaux's character studies, written in the form of letters, and are from the victim of misplaced confidence—one addressed to the perfidious lover of whose whereabouts she is ignorant, the other, to her father. In these two letters Marivaux attained to a force and dignity of expression that he elsewhere seldom reached. Not only did he avoid the slightest trace of false sentiment, but he escaped for the time his besetting sin of dilating upon almost imperceptible shades of difference between feelings scarcely distinguishable. It is difficult to believe that M. Fleury had read these letters when he said ³ that grandeur, elevation, and poetry, are totally absent from Marivaux's work, for here they are all conspicuously present. Not until *Clarissa Harlowe* appeared do we find anything comparable to their simple and pathetic eloquence. Even among *Clarissa's* letters there are

¹ *La Vie de Marianne, Œuvres Complètes de Marivaux*, Paris, 1825, Tome 6, pp. 64, 65.

² Dixième et Onzième Feuilles.

³ *Marivaux et le Marivaudage*, Paris, 1881, p. 317.

no two that equal these in power to touch the heart, for Richardson accomplished his end rather by the cumulative effect of *Clarissa's* letters than by a single complete expression of her feelings. In the general tone of these two, there is a rather striking resemblance to certain of *Clarissa's*,¹ a sufficient similarity to warrant the suggestion of the possibility that Richardson had read them in translation.

It would be interesting, though it is not essential to the attempt to show Marivaux's contribution to the development of fiction, if we could be sure that Marivaux directly influenced Richardson. That Richardson had read the English translation² of *Marianne*, in part, before the publication of *Pamela* in 1740, and wholly before 1748, when *Clarissa Harlowe* appeared, is entirely possible; and, in view of the obvious resemblances in method between the two authors, highly probable. *Marianne* had been published in Paris in installments between 1731 and 1737. An English translation of the first two parts appeared in 1736, four years before the appearance of *Pamela*, a second installment followed in 1737; and a third in 1742. Whether Richardson had read *Marianne* is a question that cannot now be settled. The easy assumptions of the French critics, made without argument,³ and the elaborate refutations of the English critics are

¹ Compare the letter addressed to the implacable father (Onzième Feuille) with *Clarissa's* posthumous letter to her father (Letter cix).

² Richardson did not read French.

³ "A ce sujet, les témoignages abondent; hostiles ou favorables à Marivaux, tous les critiques du siècle dernier s'accordent à déclarer que la *Vie de Marianne* a inspiré *Pamela* et *Clarisse Harlowe*. . . . Cependant, il est visible que Richardson a pris dans la *Vie de Marianne* l'idée et le caractère principal de *Pamela*." M. Larroumet, *Marivaux, sa vie et ses Œuvres*, Paris, 1894, pp. 314 and 315.

alike unconvincing.¹ The facts are, that it was entirely possible for Richardson to have read a considerable part of *Marianne* in translation before he finished writing *Pamela*. Secondly, the plots of the two novels have at least a superficial resemblance. Thirdly, the two heroines have many characteristics in common. Finally, the methods of narrating their experiences are strikingly similar. *Pamela*'s life is narrated in letters. *Marianne*, to be sure, is in form an autobiography. But *Marianne* writes the story of her life in her old age at the request of a friend and solely for her perusal. The manner of narration thus partakes of the intimate and discursive quality of a series of letters. "In relating her adventures," says the author, "she imagines herself to be with her friend, talking to her, answering her, and in this way she instinctively mingles the relation of facts with the reflections that occur to her in connection with them."² In view of these facts, the burden of proof would seem to rest upon those who contend that Richardson owed nothing to Marivaux. And the proof submitted is, to say the least, unconvincing.

Although we may be uncertain about the extent, and even about the existence of Richardson's obligation to Marivaux, there can be no question that the latter's influence upon the other early English novelists was indeed considerable. Both Fielding³ and Sterne⁴ read and admired him.

¹ See for example *Samuel Richardson* by Austin Dobson, London, 1902, pp. 48-50.

² *Œuvres de Marivaux*, Paris, 1781, Tome VI, p. 330. The passage is quoted, and the translation borrowed from *Samuel Richardson, A Critical Study*, by Clara L. Thomson, London, 1900, p. 151.

³ Fielding speaks of Marivaux's novels in *Joseph Andrews*, Book III, Chap. I.

⁴ Sterne's admiration for Marivaux is testified to in the *Letters and Miscellanies* published after his death. See *The Complete Works and Life of Laurence Sterne*. The Clonmel Society edition, Vol. III, *Letters and Miscellanies*, p. 16.

The latter especially shows Marivaux's influence in his incorrigible tendency to dissect in a sentimental way the feelings of his creations. This tendency he indulged to an extent much greater than Marivaux had done, partly because it was natural for him to yield himself the sport of his emotional impulses,¹ partly because sentiment had become the fashion. For the vogue of this fashion, Marivaux had been to a considerable degree responsible. Marivaux may be in part responsible also for Sterne's habit of making his characters reveal themselves through pose and gesture²—a device that Dickens later utilized for humorous effects. Marivaux's humorous scenes frequently depend for their dramatic vividness upon precisely the same artifices that Sterne employed in delineating the love passages of *Uncle Toby* with the Widow Wadman.³

In *Le Spectateur Français*, then, we find the transition between the older periodical essays as written by Addison and the novel as represented by *La Vie de Marianne* and *Le Paysan Parvenu*. The progress during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of the development of character presentation in the novel is largely the story of elements

¹ "He was unfortunately too prone—and a long course of moral self-indulgence had confirmed him in it—to the habit of caressing his own sensibilities." *Laurence Sterne*, M. D. Traill, New York, 1882, p. 157.

² "When he came to write, he carried over into literature the art of Reynolds and Garrick. His characters are depicted not only by what they say and do, but by the tones in which they speak, and by the ways in which they sit, stand, and walk. . . . He reduced gesture to an art." W. L. Cross, Introduction to Vol. II of the *Complete Works and Life of Laurence Sterne*, The Clonmel Society edition.

³ A case in point is the scene where Marianne, having been slightly injured by Valville's horses, is visited by a surgeon in Valville's house whither she has been carried. It will be found on page 82 of Volume 6 of *Œuvres Complètes de Marivaux*, Paris, 1825.

contributed alternately by French and English authors, who at the same time exerted a reciprocal influence upon each other. The English character-sketch, translated into French,¹ combined with the essay as written by Montaigne to produce the *Essays and Characters of La Bruyère*.² The latter influenced Addison, who in turn inspired *Le Spectateur* of Marivaux, also an admirer and imitator of La Bruyère. Finally, Marivaux wrote in the manner he had successfully practised in his periodical essays two novels which powerfully influenced some of the early English novelists. Each contributed some important element to the progress of the development of character portrayal. Addison, under the influence of La Bruyère, added individuality to the type the older writers of Characters³ had been content to portray. Marivaux, in turn, added the minute and sentimental analysis of feeling. The importance of this contribution seems to warrant a fuller recognition of Marivaux's place in the history of fiction than literary historians have hitherto accorded him.

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¹ Joseph Hall's *Characters of Virtues and Vices* (1608) was translated into French in 1619.

² Jean de La Bruyère's *Les Caractères de Theophraste traduits du Grec; avec les Caractères, ou les Mœurs de ce Siècle* was published in 1688.

³ Number 77 of *The Spectator* contains a translation of one of La Bruyère's "Characters." Upon the relation of Addison to La Bruyère see my article, "La Bruyère's Influence upon Addison." *Publications of the Modern Language Association of America*, vol. XIX, 1904.